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Items of Interest:

February is American Heart Month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. About 700,000 people die of heart disease annually. Heart disease is a term that includes several specific heart conditions. The most common heart disease is coronary heart disease, which often appears as a heart attack. The chance of developing coronary heart disease can be reduced by taking steps to prevent and control factors that put people at greater risk. Symptoms include shortness of breath and discomfort in the chest and other parts of the upper body. Additionally, knowing the signs and symptoms of heart attack are crucial to the most positive outcomes after having a heart attack. To learn more about heart disease and how to prevent it, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

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Naval Hospital Jacksonville Personnel Return from Deployment

By Loren Barnes, Naval Hospital Jacksonville Public Affairs

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -

"Welcome Home and Happy Birthday Lt. Brown - Sold the house! Baby walking! Husband home! Mission Complete! ~ Accursia and Tye."

A poster bearing this checklist was the first thing that Lt. Joseph Brown saw as he stepped into the Jacksonville International Airport (JIA) concourse Feb. 1. Brown was one of seven Naval Hospital (NH) Jacksonville and Branch Health Clinic medical personnel coming home from a seven-month deployment with Expeditionary Medical Facility (EMF) Kuwait.

Holding the sign was his wife, Lt. Accursia Baldasano. Brown's 17-

month-old son, Tye was in the arms of Naval Hospital Jacksonville Executive Officer (XO) Capt. David Miller. The XO, other hospital staff and some very excited family members were on hand to welcome the Sailors home. In this case, the XO had the added pleasure of wishing one of those Sailors "Happy Birthday". Brown was celebrating his 38th birthday that day, probably a birthday he'll always remember.

Baldasano said she was definitely ready to have her husband home. While he was away she had single-handedly prepared for their impending transfer to Guam. This was in addition to fulfilling her present duties as a nurse in the hospi-

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TERNATE, Republic of Philippines - Lt. Todd E. Gregory, assigned to 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, left, and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Robert O. Beveridge, assigned to Health Services Support, Combat Logistics Battalion 31, perform a medical consultation with Phillipino senior citizens during the annual bilateral exercise Balikatan 2008 (BK 08) between the Republic of the Philippines and the U.S. Feb. 19. During the BK-08 humanitarian assistance and training activities, military service members from the United States and the government of the Republic of the Philippines work together to improve maritime security and ensure humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts are efficient and effective. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joshua Wahl*

NHB Staff Begins Preparation for Upcoming Mercy Mission

By Douglas H Stutz, Nava Hospital Bremerton Public Affairs Office

BREMERTON, Wash. - In what has become a cyclical event of compassion and commitment, Naval Hospital Bremerton (NHB) personnel will embark this summer on Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). Mercy will again deploy to provide medical support, humanitarian assistance, and civil affairs aid in support of Pacific Partnership 2008 to countries primarily on the Pacific Rim.

Such humanitarian assistance is now an integral part of the Navy's updated core mission statement released last year. The Mercy's last deployment covered five months in 2006 and provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the Republic of the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia and East Timor. In all, Mercy visited ten locations in the four nations, and cared for more than 60,000 patients, as well as showcased the crew as American goodwill ambassadors.

"Building on a successful Mercy deployment in 2006 and USS Peleliu Pacific Partnership last summer, Mercy will again embark international medical, dental and engineering teams this summer to provide humanitarian support in Southeast Asia," announced Adm. Robert F.

Willard, U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander in Sydney, Australia, on Jan. 29, in a speech on U.S. Maritime Strategy.

"Providing assistance for a humanitarian mission is yet another example of our overall commitment to executing our readiness mission on a Navy-wide scale," said Capt. Catherine A. Wilson, NHB commanding officer.

In preparation for the upcoming deployment, NHB personnel spend an orientation week in December familiarizing themselves with the Mercy. "It was a week well spent," said Hospital Corpsman Moneke Burks, of NHB's Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery/Dental Department. "We went through a lot in that time, from egress routes to damage control stations to providing input for our workspaces."

According to Burks, any concern she had about adequate supplies on hand was quickly dispelled. "All medical needs were very well-stocked," she commented. "I don't think I've ever seen anything like it. It was very impressive. Obviously a lot of thought had gone into what was needed and was well organized. As Dental leading petty officer, one of my responsibilities will be to make sure we have all the instruments we need, and every port could be

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Deployment continued...

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tal's Endoscopy Suite and being a devoted mom. When Brown left, Tye wasn't walking yet and the family still had a house. Now, they are temporarily living out of the family RV and his wife is more than ready for Brown to resume his duties as dad and husband. Brown seems more than up for the job.

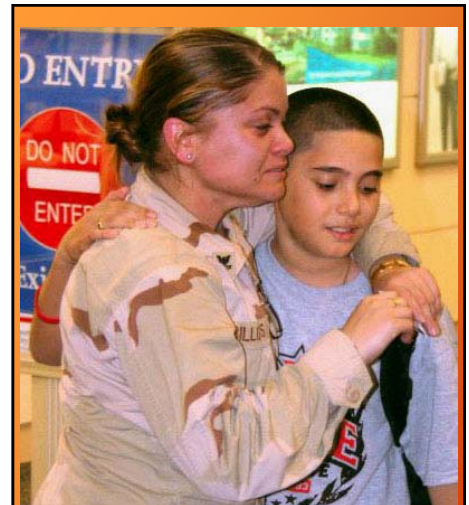
Baldassano wasn't alone in her joy at having a spouse return home. Despite the rigors of deployment, hours of air travel and being outfitted in those head-turning desert cammies, Cmdr. Elizabeth Jensen was greeted by her husband, Carlos with the words "You look sexy!" Jensen is a nurse practitioner in NH Jacksonville's Family Medicine Department.

Johanna Adkinson was there to welcome home her husband, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class David Adkinson who served as a general duty corpsman at EMF Kuwait. At the naval hospital, he works for the director of nursing services. Johanne said it had been a long seven months.

David had experienced deployment before during the first gulf war but this was a new experience for Johanna as it was his first since they have been together. She said such a separation is difficult for the spouse and their children. The Adkinson children, Thalia, Rachelly and Johanna were in school that afternoon but Johanna said they were very anxious to see David. She summed up her own feelings saying, "I'm very happy he's home."

Also on hand to welcome home these Sailors were members of the Patriot Guard Riders of Jacksonville who saluted the Sailors as they exited the airport.

The Kuwait group was one of two teams to return from supporting the war on terrorism. On Feb. 2, 18 hospital personnel were greeted by a crowd of excited family members and friends at the Naval Air Station Jacksonville Air Terminal. They were the latest group to complete a five-month tour delivering medical care at the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba detainee hospital. The hospital has been providing the



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Hospital Corpsman Second Class (HM2) Wilmary Billups sheds some tears as she's reunited with her son Donovan. She was returning from seven long months deployed to Kuwait. Billups works in Naval Hospital Jacksonville's Radiology Department. *Photo courtesy of Richard Wiggins, Patriot Guard Riders*

bulk of the staff at the facility for over a year now and that mission continues.

Hospitalman Named PCU Bush's Bluejacket of the Year

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice
Nicholas Hall, Pre-Commissioning Unit George H.W. Bush
Public Affairs

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. - To pick three Sailors per year who stand out above the rest is no easy task for any command; but the Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) George H.W. Bush's (CVN 77) has selected their Bluejacket of the Year for 2007.

Hospitalman Tyler E. Cook stood out above the rest to be selected as Bluejacket of the Year. Cook competed against four other selectees and was interviewed by a selection board to see how knowledgeable he was about the Navy, as well as current events going on around the world.

To prepare for the selection board, Cook studied everything from uniform regulations to CNN's Web site to stay up to date.

Cook credits the entire Dental Department with helping him to win this award; he said that the award belongs to the department, and he is just the lucky one who gets to accept for the award.

The leading chief petty officer of the Dental Department, Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF) Jashawn Hawkins considers Cook to be his go-to guy for any problems he may have. Due to Cook's talent and eagerness to learn, Hawkins has to be careful not to overuse him. Once Hawkins teaches Cook a job, he knows that Cook

will not stop until he is proficient at the task.

"I was the king of X-rays and I trained him and he dethroned me, which is a good thing," said Hawkins.

Cook does not like to say that he has goals for the future but instead calls them plans. To him, goals are never kept unless a plan is made to achieve them. According to Cook, education is very important, so after his tour on the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush, he plans on receiving his Bachelor of Arts in Biology and continuing on to dental school.

To Cook, being selected as the Bluejacket of the Year has its benefits. Cook feels a sense of pride and honor in representing his department, command and the Navy as a Bluejacket of the Year. Cook never believes in taking the easy route, even when it may seem that you can get away with it.

"Taking the easy route or the short cut may seem easy or you may think you're pulling a fast one over on a supervisor, but you are only selling yourself short," said Cook.

According to Cook, if you take care of your chain of command, they will do the same thing for you since it was his chain of command who nominated him for the award.

The aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush is currently under construction at the Northrop Grumman Newport News shipyard.

Critical Care Skill in Fallujah Brings NHB Nurse Recognition

By Douglas H. Stutz, Naval Hospital
Bremerton Public Affairs Office

BREMERTON, Wash. - Lt. Cmdr Lisa Saar, of Naval Hospital Bremerton, has been nominated as the top candidate of Navy Nurse Corps, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, for the Major Maria Ortiz, Operational Nursing Award, which recognizes the exceptional service of combat medical personnel. She has also been selected to be included in the upcoming Women in the Military poster for the Women in Military Service Memorial (WIMSA) to highlight the Navy Nurse Corps 100th birthday this May 13.

From August 2006 to March 2007, Saar had precious little time to ponder the notion that the Navy Nurse Corps' was established in 1908.

During that time, she was serving as critical care nurse at Fallujah Surgical, with the Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward).

Saar's assignment had her plying her skill from trauma bay to flight line and anywhere else she was needed.

"The team of doctors, nurses and corpsmen we had at Camp Fallujah were just doing what we're trained to do," said Saar. "Our forward surgical team was truly Navy Medicine at its' finest."

Saar found herself in the volatile area of Fallujah, Al Anbar Province, Iraq, still smoldering from fierce 2004 fighting in what has been called the heaviest urban combat involving American service members since the Battle of Hue City, Vietnam, in 1968. It took Saar only four days to realize that Fallujah, located approximately 43 miles west of Baghdad, was the locale of a much-in-demand surgical site with trauma unit. That day, 26 injured were brought in during a mass casualty event where her nursing skills and professionalism helped save the lives of numerous patients. The operational tempo

rarely let up.

"We were not right on the front line, but close enough," related Saar. "The majority of the wounded we dealt with were transported to us by vehicle. We'd get victims burnt, blown up, and bloodied. Most of those we treated were due to IED (improvised explosive device) blasts and sniper shots. We treated our Marines and Army personnel, and a lot of Iraqis also. The locals knew that if they got treated by us, they stood a much better chance of recovery."

Gunfire sounded close and nightly motor rounds were commonplace at times. 12-hour shifts always lingered well past the original schedule. "If we got three or four hours of shut-eye, we were good to go," said Saar. "Our berthing was right next to the trauma bay, I basically lived in trauma for days at a time. It's what we did. None of us thought to do anything

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Head of DoD Health Care Visits NH Camp Pendleton

By Douglas Allen, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton Public Affairs Office

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.—

The Honorable S. Ward Casscells, M.D., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs visited Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton Feb. 21 as part of a trip to the West Coast to attend the 2nd Annual Marine Corps Installations West/NHCP Autism Conference.

During the three and a half hour visit, Casscells toured the hospital, talked to the staff at an All-Hands Call and ate lunch with combat wounded Marines and sailors.

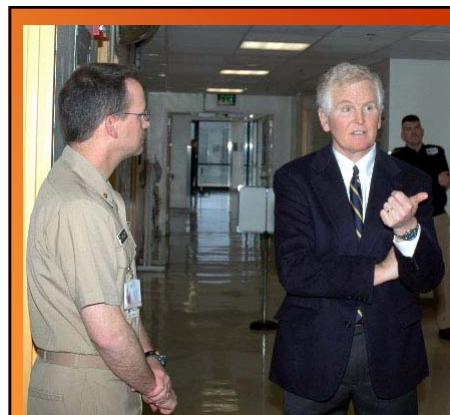
Casscells thanked the staff for their hard work both here and on the battlefield. You can take pride in your "in-theater" care and in the rehabilitation care given to our nations' wounded warriors here, he said.

He also explained how the military's medical mission has ex-

panded to more than its traditional role. He lauded the Navy for "setting the example and making humanitarian aid and disaster relief as much a mission as their kinetic operations."

At lunch, wounded Marines and sailors talked with Casscells about their care. He listened to their suggestions about both physical and mental health care. He asked what their experiences were in regards to the medical care they received from theater to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center to back stateside.

"My care has been good," said Petty Officer 2nd Class (FMF/SW) Thomas Fairbanks, a hospital corpsman at NCHP who was wounded in Iraq while attached to the 1st Marine Division. "Dr. Casscells was pleased with what he heard about the care we've received. His visit was very reassuring. It showed that everyone is concerned about our wounded warriors and is willing



NAVAL HOSPITAL CAMP PENDLETON

- The Honorable Dr. S. Ward Casscells, M.D., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, discusses wounded warrior rehabilitation care with Lt. Cmdr. Patrick Meler, MSC, USN, in the Occupational Therapy Clinic during a tour Feb. 21.
U.S. Navy photo by Douglas W. Allen

to listen to us and get information to make things even better."

NHB continued...

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different, but from what I saw, we'll be prepared for any assignment."

"We'll be on more than just a normal Western Pacific deployment," said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Steven Stanton, NHB Combined Food Service Department. "We'll be providing assistance to a number of needy people. On Mercy's last cruise, there were some people who waited for days in long lines for the ship to pull in. To be in a position to help is such an emotional feeling."

Stanton will be a supervisor and watch captain in the ship's galley. "The galley is currently being renovated, and is nice and big," said Stanton. "Besides our work on there, we will also help out with getting supplies to where they are needed at various sites ashore during the deployment. I'm looking forward to doing all I can for those in need."

The Mercy mission also had a wide range of medical, dental, and civic action services provided by

diverse and multi-specialized inter-agency and international teams, each making vital contributions to the overall mission. There were representatives from the U.S. Public Health Service. There was involvement from host nation medical personnel. There were non-host nation military personnel who embarked on the ship from India, Malaysia, Singapore, Canada and Australia. There were also non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international relief teams. The NGOs assisted with patient loads in the countries where Mercy made a port call.

Last year, NHB staff members were also part of the approximately 1,400 military and civilian medical staff, health care providers, non government organization relief personnel and support staff onboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5), which deployed for Pacific Partnership, a very-similar medical and humanitarian mission that visited islands in the Philippine archipelago, Vietnam, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and the

Marshall Islands. Over 30,000 patients were treated over the four month deployment.

The Mercy is homeported in San Diego and will have a full crew of approximately 65 civilians and over 1,200 military and civilian personnel upon deployment. The ship's primary mission is to provide rapid, flexible, and mobile acute medical and surgical services to support Marine Corps Air/Ground Task Forces deployed ashore, Army and Air Force units deployed ashore, and naval amphibious task forces and battle forces afloat.

The NHB team of doctors, nurses, corpsmen and support staff set to deploy will again combine their medical proficiency and professional ability with their top-notch talent and dedicated enthusiasm to continue the tradition of compassion and commitment to those in need.

NH Naples Names Military Hospital of the 2007 Year

By Jimmy M. Hodges, Naval Hospital Naples Public Affairs Office

NAPLES, Italy - U.S. Naval Hospital Naples (USNH) was named the 2007 Outstanding Military Hospital of the Year for Customer Satisfaction by the Department of Defense (DoD) for the second straight year in a row. This is the first time any facility has ever garnered this prestigious award twice; USNH Naples received the award for 2006 and was runner up in 2003.

The award was presented during the 2008 Military Health System's national conference, held in January in Washington, DC, and comes with a 25-thousand cash award. In competition with all U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force overseas military treatment facilities worldwide, USNH Naples proved once again they were the very best at providing quality patient and family centered care.

The award program is contracted by DoD to the Picker Institute, a leader in the development and measurement of programs dedicated solely to the improvement of the patient experience.

When a patient is seen at Naval Hospital Naples, their visit generates an electronic encounter in the Tricare database which is used to randomly select patients that receive customer satisfaction surveys. These comprehensive surveys evaluate 16 different customer service criteria and are designed around three major themes; access to care, quality of service, and friendliness and courtesy of staff.

USNH Naples personnel credit their continued work in instituting patient and family centered care initiatives, programs, and community education projects as reasons they were this year's big winners. Captain Dale Molé, USNH Naples



NAPLES, Italy – Capt. Dale Molé, U.S. Naval Hospital Naples Commanding Officer, shows off the 2007 Outstanding Military Hospital of the Year for Customer Satisfaction award. U.S. Navy photo by Jimmy M. Hodges

Commanding Officer, believes his staff received this award "for taking the extra steps to do what was right, not just what was required".

Critical Care continued...

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different. It was where we were needed. Being there was our purpose. It wasn't nearly as big a sacrifice as those we were treating to keep alive."

Saar also flew in over 20 Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) flights, mainly in Army Blackhawk helicopters taking patients on to further care at Balad Air Base or the main military hospital in Baghdad. If a Blackhawk MEDEVAC wasn't available, special circumstances required

immediate resourcefulness. "We had a critically-injured patient that we needed to get to Balad immediately," Saar recalled. "We ended up taking a Special Operations helo and although the flight was only about 30 minutes, it was nasty. We had tracers, RPGs (rocket propelled grenades) coming at us."

Despite the long hours, rustic environment and rudimentary conditions, the one constant about Saar during her deployment was a ready smile and willingness to help when needed, even beyond medical concerns and physical issues, but also emotional ones.

"Our recovery room and intensive care unit (ICU) needed a few touches of home," noted Saar. "We hung some American flags up and added other stuff we brought with us. Every thing helped."

Saar also got hold of a list of everyone's birthday and organized a get-together every month to celebrate the event. "It gave us a few hours of down time," she related.

"We all knew we were far away from home, but it really didn't matter. We were here with our Navy and Marine Corps family. The best Thanksgiving dinner I ever had was there. It was simple, just turkey and mashed potatoes and gravy in takeout plastic containers, in the Marine Ward with the 124th (battalion regiment unit), next to the trauma bay. We all told stories what our folks back home would be doing. But we were where we needed to be, and that was to care for our wounded."

Saar has a life time of memories from helping to save lives at Fallujah Surgical, but she doesn't consider herself to be a poster child for Navy Nurse Corps.

"I'm very humbled by this recognition," she said. "I was not the only one out there. What I did is exactly what all of us do. We have so many worthy nurses and providing critical care is just not something done alone. It takes a team and I was just a part."



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